



Thunder Bay Regional
Health Sciences
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100 Perks of Cancer Revealed at 23rd Tbaytel Luncheon of Hope

(Thunder Bay - ON) "Cancer sucks," confirmed Florence Strang, one of two keynote speakers at the 23rd Tbaytel Luncheon of Hope. She would know. Diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer in April 2011, Strang faced grueling treatment including chemotherapy, surgeries and radiation therapy. "But," she continued, "I realized that feeling sorry for myself wasn't going to help me get well. So I issued myself a challenge; find 100 perks of having cancer."

Strang followed through with her challenge, and blogged about each perk throughout her journey. During that time, she followed a blog by breast cancer survivor and Registered Nurse, Susan Gonzalez, entitled 'The Savvy Sister'. "Susan's blog was a source of inspiration throughout my journey," continued Strang. "There was so much information out there and it was tough to sort through it all. I knew I could count on Susan to assimilate large amounts of information into articles that were educational and also immensely entertaining."

Towards the end of Strang's perk challenge, she invited Gonzalez to join her in writing a book that would address the needs of body, mind and spirit and together, they co-authored '*100 Perks of Having Cancer, plus 100 Health Tips for Surviving It!*'

Both Strang and Gonzalez spoke to a sold-out crowd at the Tbaytel Luncheon of Hope, held at the Victoria Inn Hotel and Convention Centre this afternoon, with their message ringing out loud and clear. While having cancer is no laughing matter, the way we approach it makes a difference. Having a survivor's attitude - a positive attitude with positive action - along with exceptional care, gives you the best chance of overcoming cancer or any challenge life throws your way. "It is possible to live a happy and healthy lifestyle following a cancer diagnosis," said Gonzalez. "Florence and I are proof of that. Both of us share a strong conviction to share what we've learned along the way in hopes that it will help others facing similar challenges.

OUR MISSION: To inspire people of Northwestern Ontario to give generously to advance our healthcare at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre.

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“Our keynote speakers captured the essence of this luncheon, and reminded us that, despite the real difficulties of a cancer journey, there are ways we can pursue health and happiness,” said Tracey Nieckarz, Chair, Board of Directors, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation. “It’s our role to raise funds to ensure anyone facing breast cancer has the absolute best equipment to diagnose and treat this disease to complement the important work patients to do fight this disease.”

“Thanks to this event and generous donors across our community, last Spring we announced that the Exceptional Cancer Care Campaign had smashed through its goal of raising \$5.9M and, in fact, raised \$7.2M for our cancer centre,” continued Nieckarz. “That amount of money is hard to fathom, but its impact is clear to see. Now, a woman in Gull Bay who doesn’t have local access to breast cancer screening can receive a mammogram on the Screen for Life Mobile coach – giving her the best chance to find cancer early when it’s most treatable. It’s allowing women to receive needle biopsies in the Linda Buchan Centre to confirm or deny a breast cancer diagnosis and proceed with treatment if necessary. And it’s giving patients the best radiation therapy possible with state-of-the-art linear accelerators. Best of all, it is giving people hope – hope that they can continue to live beyond a breast cancer diagnosis.”

This year’s Tbaytel Luncheon of Hope continued to raise money for the Northern Cancer Fund to ensure that critical medical equipment for breast cancer will continue to exist at the cancer centre. “One of Tbaytel’s main corporate directions is to build lasting partnerships with organizations that share in our commitment to build strong and healthy communities,” said Tbaytel Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Communication Kathleen Jones. “We are extremely proud to support the 23rd annual Tbaytel Luncheon of Hope knowing the direct impact it will have on research, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer in Northwestern Ontario.”

Concluded Nieckarz, “Our donors and community partners like Tbaytel are the missing piece when it comes to funding equipment. Without their donations and support, we would not have access to the type of equipment we expect to have to treat our families and friends. For the 1 in 9 women and 1-2% of men who will face a breast cancer diagnosis, it’s donors to the Northern Cancer Fund who make hope possible.”

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